



TOWN OF ERIE NEWS FLASH

News & Announcements

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Letter from Mayor Harris: Oil & Gas MOU

Last August, when the Board of Trustees directed staff to renegotiate the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Encana Oil & Gas and Anadarko Petroleum, I knew we were placing this task in competent hands. I say this because two and a half years ago our Town Administrator successfully negotiated with oil & gas operators and the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission to achieve the first Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) in Colorado that included requirements which exceeded state rules and regulations. Since that time, Erie's achievement has been widely reported with headlines like "Erie's decision on drilling a thoughtful step forward" and "Erie's Oil and Gas Agreements Could Serve as Statewide Model."

As successful as the Town was in dealing with oil & gas in the past, time has not stood still. Though only an unfortunate few in Erie had to endure the noise, excruciating vibrations and disruption to daily family life caused by the drilling near Vista Ridge in early winter, it was a wake-up call to this Board for just how broken the state's system for regulating and governing oil and gas operations is. It's true the State has tied the hands of local government, but I can assure you that every member of your Board of Trustees cares about the public health and safety of you and your family. No individual owns a monopoly on this.

I believe Erie will once again lead the way on this issue – but it is an accomplishment that will be achieved by all of us working together. I encourage everyone to remain focused. We are each part of something bigger. Ignore distractions.

I appreciate that many were upset by the outcome of Tuesday night's vote on the oil & gas moratorium. However, being upset should not degenerate into name calling and other negative behavior. It is embarrassing at the least, and slanderous at the worst. The truth is I am appalled at what I have observed over the past couple of days.

To those of you (mostly on social media) who have and continue to malign Trustees, the Town Administrator and other senior staff I want you to know this: I stand proudly next to all of them. Let me be



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clear - I stand proudly next to Mark Gruber, Janice Moore, Waylon Schutt, Jennifer Carroll, Scott Charles and Dan Woog regardless of how they vote on any issue. I stand proudly with Town Administrator A.J. Krieger and his staff who continue to serve this Board and Town professionally and admirably. As we move forward in this process, please, join me in presenting your comments and arguments in a positive manner. Don't your neighbors, this Board and the Town Staff who work for us deserve that? I believe we all do.

So as we now all know, the moratorium was defeated on a 4 to 3 vote. I was not on the prevailing side. Those who voted differently than me, they voted with their principles, hearts, and the best interests of Erie in mind. After the vote, one thing we were all in agreement on was that we had much to accomplish in two weeks. Let's keep our focus on the task at hand.

The now infamous "text message" is a perfect example of a distraction that takes valuable time and resources away from negotiating successful MOUs. Some have said it was improper and/or illegal behavior. It was neither. I repeat, it was neither improper nor illegal.

One of the reasons I supported passing the Moratorium was to give us time to see what results the Governor's Oil & Gas Task Force may come up with. But let's not lose sight, the Task Force is watching us too. Did you ever consider that they may be looking to Erie to find a way forward? As I listened to everyone who spoke at Tuesday's meeting, I am once again reminded that our community is comprised of intelligent and passionate individuals. Let's not squander our opportunity to continue to show our neighbors, the state – and yes the Task Force, that Erie remains a community worth looking up to.

I will finish my comments today by saying we can still get much, if not most of what we want from an MOU if we combine our energy in a positive manner. I remain committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Erie. I will be convening a Public Meeting on Tuesday, January 20th at 5:00 pm in the Town Hall Boardroom. This meeting is to provide Erie residents to opportunity to address the Memorandums of Understanding. Please accept my invitation to provide comments and ask questions of the Board, Town Staff and the oil and gas industry.

It is an honor to serve as your Mayor.

Thank You.

Mayor Tina Harris